

ve also suffer.' All would reign with Christ, but not suffer with him ; like Zebedee's children, sit on his right hand and his left, but not drink of his cup, nor be baptized with his baptism, Mat. xxii. 22, 23. God might have customers enough for the crown, but men like not the yoke and the cross that attend it.

SERMON III.

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ; and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THESS. i. 6, 7.

HERE is an amplification of the former argument, wherein he doth more fully declare how their enduring tribulations was *ἐνδειγμα*, &c., a manifestation of God's righteous judgment.

In the words note—

1. The impulsive cause, God's justice, 'Seeing it is a righteous thing with God.'

2. The two effects, or the different retributions, 'To recompense,' &c.

3. The time when this is accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven,' &c.

I begin with the first. This is mentioned that they may be certain of the effects. *Just* is taken in two senses—(1.) *Pro eo quod jure fieri potest* ; (2.) *Pro eo quod jure fieri debet*. That which may be done without any injustice, that which ought to be done. The first, when a man doth exact his debts ; the second, for a man to pay his debts. The first may be done or not done, required or omitted, without any blemish or charge of injustice ; but the second must be done, or I am unjust if I do it not. The latter is intended here, for it is brought as a proof of the just judgment of God, in counting them worthy of his kingdom for which they suffered. God would do no injury, or were not unrighteous if he should trouble them that trouble you ; that would make but a cold sense. No ; his justice and equity requireth it ; it cannot without some injustice be omitted to punish them, and give you a relaxation from all evil.

Doct. That in the retributions of the last day God showeth his justice.

1. I shall open the justice of God.

2. Apply it to the different recompenses.

I. For the justice of God, let me set it forth in these considerations—

1. Justice is an attribute that belongeth to God as a governor. It is twofold—general and particular.

[1.] His general justice importeth the perfection of the divine nature, and is the same with his holiness. As the perfection of the divine understanding includeth all intellectual virtues, so the perfec-

tion of his will all moral virtues; and so God doth necessarily love righteousness and hate iniquity, and acteth becoming such a pure, holy, and infinite being. He can do nothing against the perfection of his nature; that is, cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13, will not give his glory to another, Isa. xlii. 8, cannot be indifferent to good and evil: Ps. v. 4, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with thee.' Hateth whatever is contrary to his holy nature: Zech. iii. 5, 'The just Lord is in the midst of thee; he will do no iniquity; every morning he bringeth his judgment to light.' Will not damn nor punish an innocent creature or a soul that loveth him, but still acteth with a condescency to his own being.

[2.] His particular justice, which respecteth not his nature, but his office, and belongeth to him as the governor and judge of the world. So he hath given a law to his creatures, and his governing justice consists in giving all their due according to his law: Deut. xxxii. 4, 'He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.'

2. Of his government there are two acts or parts—legislation and execution. Accordingly you may conceive two branches of the justice of God—legislative, or judiciary and distributive.

[1.] His legislative justice determineth man's duty, and bindeth him to the performance thereof, and also defineth the rewards and punishments which shall be due upon man's obedience or disobedience. God made man a rational voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with desires of the good and fears of the evil; therefore, that God as universal king might rule him according to his nature, he hath made for him a law that determineth good and evil, with promises to move him by desires and hopes, and threatenings to drive him by a necessary fear: Deut. xxx. 15, 'See I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil.' In the precept there is the rule of man's duty, in the sanction the rule of God's judgment or judiciary proceedings with him. And wherever this law is set up, there God is said to 'judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,' Ps. lxxvii. 4; that is, to set up holy and righteous decrees, fitted for the benefit of mankind.

[2.] His judiciary justice, called also distributive; that sort of justice whereby he rendereth unto men according to their works, whether good or evil, Rom. ii. 6, and that without respect of persons, 1 Peter i. 17, without regard to any external thing which hath no affinity with the cause that is to be judged, as profession or non-profession.

This justice is twofold—remunerative and vindictive, rewarding and punishing.

(1.) Rewarding. It is just with God to reward our obedience, or to give men what his promise hath made due to them: Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous, to forget your labour of love.' If they should never be rewarded or forgotten, God should be unrighteous or unfaithful, which to imagine is abominable: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, will give me in that day.' It is from God's righteousness and promise, with respect had to Christ's merit, and the qualification of the parties; as I shall more fully show by and by.

(2.) Vindictive, or punishing justice. God punisheth none but sinners, and only for sin, and that according to the measure of the sin: Rom. ii. 7,-9, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the gentile.' Despisers of the grace of the gospel, John iii. 19; Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy?' There is a special guilt in such a sin, which will be most tormenting and vexing to us. They have no cause to impute their damnation to anything but their own wilful neglect.

3. This distributive justice is exercised either more darkly or plainly.

[1.] More darkly. The world is not governed by chance, but administered by an all-wise and most just providence. Here in this world now there is a punishment of the wicked, and a reward of the righteous. For punishment God keepeth a petty sessions before the day of general assizes: wickedness is now punished: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven,' &c. Now and then God doth so sensibly and visibly reward the righteous, that men are forced to acknowledge that godliness is matter of benefit in this world, abstracted from the rewards of another life: Ps. lviii. 11, 'Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth, verily there is a reward for the righteous.'

[2.] More plainly hereafter, when God will openly and beyond all doubt and question make good his word to his people, and declare his vengeance against the wicked. The great end of the day of judgment is the demonstration of God's remunerative and vindictive justice; therefore called 'the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 5. He will not only glorify his love and mercy in the salvation of the elect, but his justice also in rewarding the performers of the condition, and what his promise hath made their due. The business then is to remove the veil, Acts xvii. 31. The difference between the last time and now is this—

(1.) That the righteous and the wicked have but the beginnings of their reward and punishment. The wicked are not altogether without punishment, but they are but the beginnings of sorrow, if you respect God's external or internal government. As to his internal government, the carnal world mindeth it not much, but yet others may perceive it, as by troubles and gripes of conscience, Heb. ii. 15, or impenitence, or hardness of heart: Eph. iv. 19, 'Past feeling;' Ps. lxxxii. 12, conscience terrified or stupified. But the external government of God is exercised, so far as the world is not left without a sufficient witness of the justice of God, to give them warning what they may expect in the other world, and to keep up the belief of a providence; that is to say, that the governor of the world mindeth the affairs of the world, and so that he may be known to be a holy and just God: Ps. clxv. 17, 'He is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works.' This is so far discovered in all the acts of God's providence, that the contrary is never discerned. Now we may say, Rev. xvi. 5, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.' There is some foregoing punishment, which we may take notice of for the people of God

in this life. His servants have much of his mercy, and the beginnings of their reward in the beginnings of their salvation, but the fulness is reserved for the world to come. As to his internal government, his people have much of his love, in peace of conscience, increase of grace, tastes of God's acceptance, assistance of the Spirit, answers of prayer, and sweet foretastes of eternal life. As to his external government, men here may sometimes 'discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not,' Mal. iii. 17, 18, but at the general judgment this is fully manifested in eternal reward and punishment.

(2.) The justice of God now appeareth more negatively than positively; that is to say, God doth nothing contrary to justice. As to his rewards of his servants, none can justly charge him for a neglect of them, they having deserved nothing which they enjoy, Gen. xxxii. 19, and having deserved much more than they suffer, Ezra ix. 13. All benefits are more, all corrections less than they deserve. And therefore it is not necessary that the justice of God should be always positively conspicuous; it is enough that it should be negatively conspicuous, that God do nothing contrary to his governing justice; as a man is always risible, yet he doth not always laugh; we cannot deny the faculty because of the cessation of the act. God is always just, but he doth not always exercise his remunerative justice. So for the effects of his vindictive justice; it is not always necessary they should be exercised in the day of his patience, in cutting off sinners presently as soon as they sin, and putting them into their final state; because men are now upon their trial, and the present government of the world is not that of sense, but of faith; therefore God waiteth to see if men will break off their sins, and make themselves capable of his mercy: 2 Peter iii. 9, 'God is not slack concerning his promise.' But hasty men would have all things done within time, without expectation of eternity. But God, that knoweth what long-suffering is necessary to the most obstinate creatures, doth not presently cast them off from all expectation of mercy. Christianity would have lost a Paul and many a useful instrument if the final judgment of God had gone according to our fancies and hasty censures. There is room still for repentance, God being always willing that the apostate state of mankind should have time, and day, and means to repent, and turn unto the Lord.

(3.) How God will exercise his fatherly justice upon his people, and his patience toward the wicked.

(1st.) His corrective justice toward his people, by many penal evils inflicted up them: 1 Sam. vii. 14, 'If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men.' The faults of the godly procure to them sharp correction: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'We are judged when we are chastened of the Lord,' &c. There is fatherly love, though also corrective justice, and the saints acknowledge it: Neh. ix. 33, 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done righteously, but we have done wickedly.' So David: Ps. cxix. 137, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.' Sharp corrections are but just; all is good to the godly.

(2d.) Patience towards the wicked: Rom. ix. 22, πολλῆ μακροθυμίας, 'endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath.' They

shall want no arguments to convince them of their folly and impenitency when they are in hell.

(4.) Now it is clouded, then conspicuous. There is a veil upon God's proceedings, they are sometimes secret, always just: Ps. xcii. 2, 'To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.'

II. Let us apply it to the different recompenses here mentioned; and so—

1. To the punishment of the wicked: 'To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.' There is no great difficulty to suit this part of the judgment to God's righteousness; for sinners deserve the punishment which is inflicted upon them, who lived in ease and pomp, and neglected God's laws, and oppressed his servants, that were more faithful than themselves.

There is a double reason of their punishment—

[1.] Their own disobedience to the laws of their creator, which is enough to involve them in eternal ruin: Rom. ii. 8, 'But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, tribulation and wrath.' Men that dispute away their duty to God, and live in the world as if they had no superior but such as their interests engage them to own, and as if there were no God, no judgment, there can be nothing pleaded for them.

[2.] Their opposing them that would obey God, and so they make themselves an opposite party to God, and consent with the devil in his apostasy. There are two kingdoms in the world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; these are opposite. It is enough to our ruin to remain in the one and not accept of the other, when God cometh to reckon, Col. i. 18, Acts xxvi. 18. But it is a double condemnation if we be factors and agents for the one against the other. These carry on not only a defensive but offensive war against God; for these set themselves point-blank against the kingdom of God in the world, not only refusing it themselves, but seeking to discourage others: Mat. xxiii. 13, 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of God against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in.' They divert others to their power, not only by example, but persecution and opposition to them. And if they have come under some visible engagement to Christ, their crime is the greater. If they smite their fellow-servants, and eat and drink with the drunken, Mat. xxiv. 49, malign, envy, traduce, and injure them who are faithful to the law of Christ, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, no wonder they are punished. Surely that is just which right and equity requireth, either from the nature of the thing or the threatenings of God. It only admitteth this condition, if they repent as Paul did, who did it ignorantly.

2. If we refer it to the other effect, 'To give you that are troubled rest.'

How is this just with God?

I answer—Things may be said to be righteous with God three ways—

(1.) In respect of strict justice, when what we do deserveth the reward by the intrinsic value, worth, and condignity of our obedience. So no

obedience, whether of man or angel, though never so perfect, can bind God to reward it. There is this difference between sin and obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of obedience is still lessened. The sin or offence is aggravated, as to strike an officer is more than to strike a private man, a king more than an ordinary officer. Thence it cometh to pass that a sin committed against God doth deserve an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is infinite; and so eternal death is the wages of sin. But on the other side, the value and merit of obedience is lessened. The greater God is, and the more glorious his being, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love and serve him; and the good which we do for his sake being wholly due to him, God is not bound by any right or justice from the merit of the action itself to reward it; for here the greatness of the object lesseneth the action, or respect thereby performed to it, Luke xvii. 10; for the creature oweth itself to God, who made it, and enabled it to do all that it can do; so that he is not bound to reward it out of his natural justice, but inclined to do it out of his own goodness, and bound to do it by his free promise and gracious covenant.

(2.) There is his justice of bounty and free beneficence. God is just by way of bounty when he rewards man capable of reward and accounted worthy, though not in respect of perfect righteousness in himself, yet because he is some way righteous. This capacity of the reward respects either the righteousness of Christ, and that satisfaction he hath paid for us, Rom. iii. 25, 26, or the difference between the person recompensed and others; that he loveth God, is willing to suffer for him, and worketh righteousness. General justice doth require that he should reward the righteous, and put a difference between the godly and the wicked. That governor that useth all alike is not just. Therefore it is said, Ps. xi. 7, that 'the righteous God loveth righteousness.' It is agreeable to justice in general, *ratione justice*, that wicked persecutors should not go unpunished, but that God should deal with them as they have done with others, and that they who have unjustly suffered in this world should be righted in another world, since they suffer out of love to God, and for his sake, and merely out of the hopes of that other and better world.

(3.) God is just in respect of his promise. The condition being performed, his justice obligeth him; he hath bound himself by his covenant, and his righteousness implieth his veracity and faithfulness, 1 John i. 9. Not as if our patience merited it, as the oppressors deserve and are worthy of punishment, but God's promise assureth us of it; for though his promise be free, yet, if it be once made, justice doth require it, and God is not free, but bound to perform it.

Use 1. Terror to the wicked, especially those that are enemies of Christ's kingdom in the world, and haters of those that are good, 2 Tim. iii. 3. God is just, and will at length call you to an account. Consider, he is just in his legislation; as he would not make unrighteous laws for the pleasure of men, so he is just in execution, he will not pass unrighteous judgment. Your carnal minds are enemies to his laws, Rom. viii. 7, and your unbelieving hearts question his threatenings. But his laws are his laws, however you dislike them, and his

threatenings are his threatenings, however you question the truth of them. His threatenings to be accomplished within time show always the merit of your actions, often the event; but his eternal threatenings will be made good. Hell is not a painted fire. As he will not repeal his established laws because you dislike them, so he will not revoke his threatenings for fear of hurting such wilful and impenitent sinners as you are. They that will not fear his judgments shall feel them. The wicked put it to trial whose word shall stand, God's or theirs: Jer. xlv. 28, 'They say, Peace, peace;' God saith, Woe, wrath, tribulation, anguish; and it shall be fulfilled or made good. But it is a sad thing to stand to that adventure; you may set a good face on it, but conscience owneth the justice, Rom. i. 32. Thence guilty fears arise, which are so natural to man, that we can neither deny nor put off. Nature is afraid of a just judge, and the consent of all people doth evidence it. Therefore we should think of it, and prepare ourselves to be judged by him.

2. For the consolation of the faithful. God is righteous. You experiment his mercy here by the way, in pardoning your sins and sanctifying your afflictions, comforting you under them, and giving a gracious issue out of them; but then you shall find him just—(1.) In punishing your unreasonable enemies, 2 Peter ii. 9. (2.) Your reward is sure: Prov. xi. 18, 'To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.' Therefore we should the more resolutely forsake the pleasures of sin, and endure the afflictions of the gospel, and continue with patience in well-doing, that we may not lose what we have wrought. You have a pledge of this in the new nature given to you. As any are made partakers of a divine nature, they are more just and righteous, hate sin and sinners, love the godly. It is said of Lot, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, that 'just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man, dwelling among them, vexed his soul from day to day in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.' God, that created such a principle of grace in us, is much more righteous. Retributive justice is a ray of God's righteousness. God is said to be with him in the judgment, 2 Chron. xix. 6.

I come now more particularly to discuss the two effects.

First, To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. Tribulation in the issue is the portion of the wicked: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' But here the apostle would draw us to consider the harmony and agreeableness between the punishment and the offence. And thence we note—

That God usually retaliateth with men.

First, As here, 'It is just with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;' that the troublers should be troubled. You will say, How can this tribulation which is recompensed imply the ruin of the soul, when they afflicted only the bodies of the saints?

I answer—Two ways—

1. Because they can go no further: Luke xii. 4, 'Fear not them that only can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' Implying they would do more if it were in their power, so great is their malice against the saints.

2. This trouble they occasion to the saints is their soul's sin; not

only the fruit of the violence of their hands, but of the enmity of their souls against the power of godliness, 1 John iii. 12. With their souls they sinned, and they are punished in their souls as well as their bodies. So that argueth this judgment of counter-passion, that as they do to others it shall be done unto themselves. God threateneth it in his word: Exod. xxii. 22, 24, 'Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.' But what would come of it if they did? God threateneth that he 'will kill you by the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children shall be fatherless.' It should be returned and paid home in the same coin. So Rev. xvi. 5, 6, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, for they have shed the blood of the saints, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.' There the angel of the waters applauds the suitableness of the judgment; they had made God's saints a prey by their rigorous laws, and God would make them a prey to the destroyer. There is a proportionableness between the sin and the judgment; bloody men shall drink their fill of blood. Now this prophetic scheme and draught is a threatening. So James ii. 13, 'He shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy.' God will meet men in their own way of sinning, that his judgment may be the more conspicuous.

Secondly, God observeth this course in his providence: Judges i. 7, 'Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.' Affliction, which is the most trusty counsellor to princes of all their retinue, for it knoweth not how to flatter, taught him to see his cruelty, and the justice of God in his punishment. The like justice God used to Pharaoh, who appointed the children of Israel to be drowned in the waters, and at length he and all his host were drowned in a branch of the Red Sea. So God showed himself the patron of oppressed infants. Indeed, what more usual than that malefactors are dealt with according to their own wicked ways? As God threateneth Edom, Obad. 5, 'As thou hast dealt, so shall it be done to thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.' Ahab's blood was lapped up by dogs in the place where they had shed the blood of Naboth. Jezebel was more guilty than he: Ahab permitted, Jezebel contrived. Ahab humbled himself, therefore Ahab was buried with honour, but Jezebel was entombed in the bellies of the dogs. Haman was executed on the gallows set up for Mordecai, Esther vii. 10. Henry the Third of France was killed in the chamber where the massacre was contrived, and Charles the Ninth died flowing in his blood in his bed. In the parable, *desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam*—He wanted a drop who gave not a crumb. But is it so with good men also? Yes; Jacob, that got the blessing by a wile, and came to Isaac, the younger for the elder, after seven years' hard service was put off with Leah, the blear-eyed elder sister, instead of Rachel, the beautiful younger sister. Asa, that put the prophet in the stocks, was diseased in his feet. Joseph was not flexible to his brethren's requests, as they were inexorable to him in his extremity: Gen. xlii. 21, 22, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.' This was many years after the fact committed; they knew

not Joseph. David, Absalom, 2 Sam. xii. 10–12. Paul consented to the stoning of Stephen; yea, assisted at his execution, for they laid down their garments at Paul's feet; and therefore Paul was afterward stoned and left for dead, Acts xiv. 19, 20. Stephen prayed for him among the rest, 'Lay it not to their charge;' yet God gave him some remembrance of this sin. Barnabas was not stoned, who was assistant to Paul, but Paul was stoned; both had been alike offensive for preaching the gospel at Iconium. Paul was sensible of this crying sin, Acts xxii. 20. Well, then, if men will do to others what they should not, God will do to them what they would not. But here eternal vengeance is threatened.

Use 1. Let us take heed how we oppress any, especially that our hearts boil not with rancour and malice against God's children. Injuriousness and cruelty to the faithful will not go unrevengeed. It may be you think you do God good service, John xvi. 2. But that doth not excuse you from punishment, for God will not be served with furious and blind zeal. The rule is general, 'It is just with God to recompense tribulation,' &c.

2. Let not the godly be envious and repine at the temporal prosperity of wicked men. Their ruin is certain; God will remember them that show no mercy, but heavily lay on the yoke, Isa. xlvi. 6. God will put the cup of affliction into other hands, if you can but tarry his leisure, Isa. li. 22.

Secondly, 'And to you that are troubled rest with us.' There is his recompense to the faithful, and that which is appointed to them is rest; and not barely so, but 'rest with us.' Paul and the other apostles of the Lord were engaged in the same cause, and looked for a like issue. The apostles had a particular promise, Mat. xix. 28; but they were all fellow-soldiers in the same warfare, and as to the substance of it, expected the same crown.

Here note two things—

1. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion of rest. Here the word is *ἀνεσις*, which signifies a cessation or relaxation from all their troubles; but it implieth more than at first appeareth; not only a release from their troubles, but eternal glory and happiness in proportion to their troubles, 2 Cor. iv. 7. But a rest it is called—(1.) Sometimes in allusion to the rest of Canaan, where the people of God fixed their abode after their wearisome pilgrimage. So it is taken Heb. iv. 1, 'We having a promise of entering into his rest left us, let us fear lest any of us should seem to come short of it.' And so it noteth that heaven is the place of our eternal abode; after our pilgrimage in the world; there is our home and resting-place. (2.) Sometimes it is spoken of with allusion to the sabbatic rest: Heb. iv. 9, 'There remaineth therefore a rest for the children of God.' The word there is *σαββάτισμος*. It is a celebration of an eternal sabbath to God. Our abode there and business there is perpetual worship, and we go there not only to enjoy God, but to adore God. Heaven is a temple, and christians are all priests, Rev. i. 6. We are not fully made kings till we reign with him, nor priests till we come to minister immediately before the throne. If the priesthood we have by Christ doth chiefly concern our ministration in the heavenly temple, the case is

clear; here we are consecrated, fitted by justifying and sanctifying grace. (3.) It is called a rest in opposition to those tedious conflicts that we have about our spiritual estate and condition before God; but then all is at an end, when the pardon is pronounced by the judge's own mouth, Acts iii. 19. So it is ἀναψυξις: then is everlasting joy and refreshing, no more conflicts and agonies of conscience; our doubts and fears are quite gone, and we are at rest in Christ. (4.) It is sometimes called rest in opposition to whatever was grievous and burdensome in our duties: Rev. xiv. 13, 'They rest from their labours.' They cease not from duty, but from whatsoever was burdensome and troublesome in their duty, either through the weakness of their flesh, or their want of satisfaction in God. (1st.) The weakness of the flesh maketh duty wearisome to us. But there we are all spirit; even this body shall become a spiritual body, and it shall be no labour to us to serve God. (2d.) Want of satisfaction in God. *Adepto fine, cessat motus.* When the soul hath what it would have, it is at rest. Fulness of joy, satisfied with thy likeness. (5.) It is called rest in opposition to the calamities and troubles of the present life. So in the text, and Isa. lvii. 2, 'Rest in their beds.' Their souls at rest with God, and their bodies in their graves.

Use. We say rest in God, but we forget our true resting-place. Arise! here is not your rest, Micah ii. 10; as right passengers with their staves in their hands, enter into heaven.

SERMON IV.

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THESS. i. 6, 7.

DOCT. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion of a rest.

1. We shall inquire what a rest this is.
2. Why it is represented under this notion.

I. What is this rest?

1. It is a felicitating rest; not a bare cessation from troubles (as the word ἀνεσις would seem to import), or a freedom from evil, but the enjoyment of all good.

[1.] In this rest there is a freedom from all troublesome evils. In this estate there is neither sin nor misery. Sin grieveth the saints most, Rom. vii. 24. If any had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more; he was whipped, imprisoned, stoned; but lusts troubled him more than scourges, and his captivity to the law of sin was the worst bondage. To be sinning here whilst others are glorifying God is grievous to the saints. A beast will forsake the place where he findeth neither meat nor rest. The saints do live with manifold fail-

ings, but in heaven there is no sin, Eph. v. 27 ; no spot nor wrinkle upon the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black as ours, but now they are fully cleansed, made fair as the sun, bright as the moon. Christ will present them as such to God, as rejoicing in the fruits of his purchase. Alas ! what a trouble is it now to mortify one lust, or to prevent it from breaking out into some scandalous practice ! We cannot do anything but sin will mingle with it, or enjoy anything but we grow proud and sensual. A worm may breed in manna, 2 Cor. xii. 7. But then we are most high and most humble and holy. What is it we struggled under and groaned under all our lives but sin ? But now there is no sin, and no temptations to sin. In paradise there was a tempter, but not in heaven. Satan was long since cast out thence, and the saints come to fill up the vacant rooms of the apostate angels. The world is a place of snares, a valley of temptations, the devil's circuit wherein he walketh to and fro ; but no serpent can creep into the upper paradise. Here we cry, ' Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' There our cries are heard to the full ; we are neither tempted, nor shall we displease God any more ; sin is not only mortified but nullified.

[2.] There is no more misery nor affliction. Whatever is painful and burdensome is a fruit of the fall, a brand and mark of our rebellion against God ; but there affliction is done away as well as sin. Both recompenses are without mixture. In hell there is an evil and only evil, without any temperament of good ; and in heaven there is happiness and only happiness, without any alloy of evil : ' God will wipe all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any pain,' Rev. xxii. 4. No more doubts of God's love, no sense of his displeasure. Here, when the wounds are healed the scars remain ; we have many suspicious thoughts still ; we need to be dieted ; the honey of God's love would grow too luscious if we did not taste something of the vinegar and the gall ; but there is full and uninterrupted joy. Here the candle of the Lord doth not always shine upon us alike brightly, but there our sun remaineth in an eternal high noon, without clouds or overcasting. If our souls be at ease, yet the body hath its afflictions. We make it too often the instrument of sin, therefore God justly maketh it the subject of diseases. But there are no gouts, and agues and fevers, nor stone, nor cholic, but the body for ever remaineth in an eternal spring of youth. And for violence from without and oppressions, there is no cry of destruction upon destruction, no tumult to discompose that blessed region wherein God will place his faithful ones ; no company of the wicked to vex these righteous souls, much less have they any power to molest them, but they are bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, as unruly men that trouble the faithful subjects are put into prison. Again, then we are freed from the inconveniencies of hunger, and nakedness, and want ; for these are bodily necessities incident to the present state ; but there wholly freed from the necessities of nature, 1 Cor. vi. 12. There is no need of meat, drink, or apparel. The body now is a kind of prison to the soul, but then it is a temple.

[3.] An enjoyment of all good ; for God is all in all, whom we know and love. We love what we see, and enjoy what we love. The

blessedness of the soul is the heaven of heavens. It is called the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. It is not for their turn that know no other happiness but to eat, drink, and sleep, and wallow in brutish pleasures. It is an inheritance in light, that consists in the vision and fruition of God; and it is for saints, that are clarified from the dregs of sense, and know how to value and prize these things. To our felicity three things are necessary—(1.) A prepared faculty; (2.) A suitable object; (3.) The conjunction of both these. In the state of glory all these things concur; the faculty is more capacious, the object is more fully represented, and the fruition is more intimate than possibly it can be here. The faculty is more prepared, as we are purged from sin, and freed from the delusions of the flesh. The object is more manifested, for there we see God 'face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The conjunction is more intimate; for here it is by faith, and that is an imperfect sight, there by vision; here by an imperfect love, there by perfect love. Now he that is joined to the Lord is made one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. But oh, what a conjunction will it be when we shall be joined to the Lord by sight and perfect love! Vision shall succeed to faith, and possession to hope, and the soul adhereth to him without possibility of diversion. It is hard to speak of heaven till the great voice of his providence call upon us to come up and see what God hath provided for us. But, in short, vision maketh way for assimilation, and assimilation for full satisfaction. See 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him;' as iron by lying in the fire seemeth all fire. This for full satisfaction: 'I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,' Ps. xvii. 15. The soul is then at rest; it hath enough in God, in seeing God, and loving God, and being made like God.

2. It is an holy and religious rest, a perpetual sabbatising, Heb. iv. 9, *σαββάτισμος*; a celebrating of an eternal sabbath to God. A sabbath is an holy rest, not a time of idleness, but to be religiously spent and employed; so this rest and sabbatism, which is promised to believers, is not passed over in ease and sloth, but in acts of worship and adoration. It is a rest from toil and labour, but not from work and service. On the sabbath-day the sacrifices were doubled, Num. xxviii. 1. In our everlasting sabbatism we serve God after a more perfect manner, especially delighting and rejoicing in God, and praising his name. The place agreeth with this notion as well as the time. Heaven is represented under the notion of a temple, as the state of glory by a sabbatism. There were three partitions in the temple—the outward court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; as there is an airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, Acts iii. 21; and sometimes the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2. This heaven of heavens is the seat of God and the blessed saints, often called the holiest, with respect to the type of the temple or sanctuary, Heb. ix. 24. The apostle tells you that the earthly or worldly sanctuary was a type of the true holy place, heaven itself, the throne and palace of God, where his people are admitted into a nearer attendance upon God. Well, then, if the state of glory be a sabbath and heaven a temple, we have but one thing to do more, that is, to find out a priest. So christians are; that is their quality and function; for it is said, Rev. i. 6, 'He hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' Now all the difficulty is whether this

priesthood relateth to our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, which we offer upon earth, or to our worship in heaven when we are admitted into the immediate presence of God, and praise him for evermore; whether it concerneth our ministration before the throne of grace, or before the throne of glory. I do not exclude the former; but because the latter is a truth commonly overlooked, I will prove that the priesthood which we have by Christ concerneth our ministration in the heavenly temple. I prove it—

[1.] From our conformity to Christ. If Christ were not consecrated to his everlasting priesthood till he died, the like is to be presumed of a christian. But so it is that this is clear of Christ: Heb. v. 9, *τελειωθεις*, 'Being made perfect through sufferings,' &c. At his death the rites of his consecration were over; therefore a christian, who runneth parallel with Christ in all his offices, is fully consecrated and fitted to officiate before God.

[2.] This suiteth with the other privilege; we are made kings as well as priests. Now our kingly office is imperfect till we come to heaven. A poor christian is but a king in a riddle; as he vanquisheth the devil, the world, and the flesh, in some weak manner, he hath a princely spirit. The kingdom of which we partake by Christ is mainly hereafter, Luke xii. 32; 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' So proportionably the other privilege of being made priests must be expounded also. We have our sacrifices now, but this office is not completed till we enter into the holiest, Heb. x. 19; not in spirit only, but in person.

[3.] If our consecration be not consummated till death, our office is not perfect till then. Our consecration to the spiritual priesthood consists in our justification and sanctification, both which are now imperfect: Heb. x. 22, we are bidden to 'draw nigh to God' (which is a priestly notion), 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water.' Now we are not perfect as appertaining to the conscience, and can hardly get above our legal fears, nor are we fully cleansed and sanctified; but when our consecration is perfected, then are we fitted to serve God in his heavenly temple.

[4.] Nearness of access to God, and ministration before him, is the privilege of priests. Now we are kept at a distance; all that we can have in this life is to draw nigh to the throne of grace; but we are not admitted to God's immediate sight and presence. But when we minister before the throne of glory, then we have full communion with our God, and a clear vision of his blessed face; and then we are priests indeed when we come into the heavenly sanctuary.

Well, then, our service is not ended with our lives. As we still stand in the relation of creatures to God, so we must still glorify him and serve him: Rev. vii. 14, 15, 'And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white with the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; and they shall hunger no more, and thirst no more,' &c. Then we shall not serve him by fits and starts, but constantly. We shall not

be at a distance from God, nor God at a distance from us; but we shall still enjoy his company, lauding and praising his name. Here we are learners, there practisers. We shall then have a clearer sight of his excellencies, and a fuller sense of his benefits, and accordingly offer up to him the continual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

3. It is a rest for the whole person, soul and body both, but in their order. This I note, lest you should interpret this rest of their quiet abode in the grave, as it is sometimes understood. Isa. lvii. 2, 'They shall rest in their beds;' when the righteous are taken from the tumults of the world, and the evils that ensue after their death. Death is a sleep and quiet repose. But this is not meant of death, but of glory; the rest of the body in the grave is common to the wicked. Now, as their bodies are laid down to rest in the grave as in a bed, there to sleep quietly until the general resurrection, so their souls pass into a place of rest and bliss. The soul first entereth into rest. When men come first into the world, the body is first framed, and the soul cometh after; for this lower region is properly the place of bodies; therefore reason requireth that the body, which is a citizen of the world, should first be framed, that it may be a fit receptacle for the soul, which is a stranger, and cometh from the region of spirits, which is above. But when we must remove into those heavenly habitations, then it is quite otherwise; for then the soul, as a native of that place, is presently admitted, but the body, as a stranger, is forced to reside in the grave till the day of judgment, and then our bodies also are admitted into heaven; this is the law of all private persons. Indeed Christ, who is the head of the church, is not subject to it; his body as well as his human spirit was made a denizen of heaven as soon as he ascended. He entered not there as a private citizen, but as king and lord of the heavenly Jerusalem, and therefore carried both body and soul along with him. But as to us, the soul goeth first there as to its proper seat, and after the final judgment both soul and body. Therefore the apostle saith, 'To give you that are troubled rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.' Then shall our reward be full. But that you may not think that this rest only implieth the sleep of death, and our quiet abode in the grave till we be awakened at the last day, I shall prove to you—(1.) That the souls of the faithful enter into a blissful estate as soon as they depart out of the body; (2.) What will be the condition of the body in the resurrection.

[1.] That souls as soon as they flit out of the body are at rest with the Lord. There are a sort of men so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come. Some question the immortality of the soul; others assert the sleep of it, because they imagine it to be so tied to the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations without it; but that is a groundless error.

(1.) If death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ, surely the soul, notwithstanding death, is capable of showing love to God, and enjoying the fruits of his love to us: Rom. viii. 38, 39, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Take it for our love to God, or God's love to us; it is our happiness to love

God, and be beloved of him. If death cannot vacate this or make it to cease, separate souls may love God, and enjoy the fruits of his love to them.

(2.) If the souls of the saints, as soon as they are loosed from the body, be with God and Christ, then they are in a state of bliss: Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' How could that be *πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρείσσον*, by much far the better, if the soul were deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain in a dead sleepy state? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake than to sleep? to be hard at work for God than to be idle and sit still? to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless condition? What profit is it to be with the Lord and not enjoy his company? It is better to have our present love, knowledge, service, tastes, and experiences, than to lie in a stupid lethargy without all understanding and spiritual sense. It would be a loss to Paul if his body should lie rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God. What can be imagined to be that preponderating happiness which should sway his choice? Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings? But God's people, who have resigned themselves to God, are wont to value their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with great labours and afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in a strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a condition of stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoying God. God's people are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's presence before the greatest contentments with his absence: 'If thou go not up with us, carry us not hence.' Better be with God in the wilderness than in Canaan without him. But so they are: 2 Cor. v. i. 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Surely if the soul sleep till the resurrection, they should not say, When this house is dissolved; but, When this house is raised, and this tabernacle is restored. When the saints desire to part with the body, it is not for want of love to the body, but out of love to their souls; they would wish mortality were swallowed up of life, that the body might go along with the soul into glory. So ver. 8, 'We are willing to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord;' implying that as soon as the one is effected and brought about, the other taketh place; otherwise more absent when out of the body.

(3.) If when they are with the Lord they are in a better state than now, surely then they are not only *in manu Dei*, in the hand of God; but admitted *in conspectum Dei*, into the presence of God. It were also absurd to long for a dissolution of that estate wherein we feel the love of God and Christ, sometimes with us, unspeakable and glorious, for an estate wherein there is no sight and sense of God and Christ, and celestial and heavenly things. But so it is that they account this more eligible, Phil. i. 23.

(4.) If the wicked and the righteous be in their final estate as soon as they die, surely then the rest of the saints beginneth presently upon their dissolution; for as the trouble of the wicked is, so is the rest of the saints. But this we find in the scriptures, that the spirits of the

disobedient are now in hell as in a prison, 1 Peter iii. 19. The souls of men and women do not vanish into nothing, are not extinguished in their bodies, nor are detained by the way in some third place; but as soon as they depart out of the body, go to the place and state of torment. On the other side, the spirits of just men are said to be made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. When they are clothed and divested of their bodies, they are perfected in heaven; which cannot be said if they did lie in a dull sleep, without any life, light, joy, or act of love to God.

(5.) What is said to one convert belongeth to all in the same circumstances, and to them in like cases: Luke xxiii. 45, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By 'paradise' is meant heaven, as Paul calleth the third heaven paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4, in allusion to Eden, or the garden out of which Adam was driven; not in regard of his body (for that was disposed of as men pleased), but his soul. But when the soul was in paradise, was it deprived of all sense, yea or no? Certainly no, for it was with Christ. And 'this day;' this comfort was not adjourned to commence some fifteen hundred or two thousand years afterward; as this is a great comfort to those that are hard at work for God; the time of your ease and refreshing is at hand; if suffering, it will be soon over, and then your joys begin; to the sick, it is but a little longer pain; to the dying, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye you will be with God.

(6.) If those already departed be living with God in heaven, those that follow after may upon the same terms expect it. Now it is so; the patriarchs are already with God, they all live to God: Luke xx. 37, 38, 'For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' Then all the elect that are already departed are glorified: Col. i. 20, 'By the blood of his cross he hath reconciled all things to God, both in heaven and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether triumphant or militant. It cannot be meant of the angels; there was never a breach between God and them, and therefore they cannot be said to be reconciled to him. If things in heaven be reconciled, it is meant of the glorified saints.

Two reasons why our reward is represented under the notion of rest.

(1st.) Because it suiteth with the aim of the saints. It is the end of motion. None have it but those that seek after it. We are all traveling into the other world. Some are posting to eternal torment; they choose a broad way and have much company, and go on pleasantly for the time, but this course endeth sadly; this is the path that leadeth down to the chambers of death. But others are going to life and rest; they enter into it by a strait gate, walk in a narrow way,—the strait gate of repentance, the narrow way of new obedience; but the end is blessed and glorious, Mat. vii. 13, 14. This life is a walk and a journey; we are now in motion and in passage. *Adepto fine, cessat motus.* When we come to the place we intend, there we take our rest. Every day a christian cometh nearer the shore: Rom. xiii. 11, 'Your salvation is nearer than it was when you first believed.' Only it standeth us upon to consider whether we go right. Every journey hath a period, and every motion its end and rest.

(2d.) This term suiteth best with the goodness of God, who delighteth

to recompense his people for all their pain and weariness; he hath a care of his weary servants now. Many times the pangs of the new birth are sharp and tedious, therefore he giveth some the tongue of the learned, that they may refresh the weary soul, Isa. l. 4. And Christ saith, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.' It is our rest by the way; so at the end of the journey. A constant course of holiness puts upon many labours, and sorrows, and conflicts. (1.) Labours. The Lord taketh notice of them, Heb. vi. 10, 1 Cor. xv. 28; therefore the Lord telleth the laborious soul of a rest. (2.) Sorrows, through our manifold calamities and afflictions: John xvi. 20, 'The world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' They shall have much comfort and refreshing for their sad hours. The world rejoiceth when Christ is removed, and gone out of the world; but the saints rejoice when Christ cometh; then is their complete rest. (3.) Conflicts with the devil, the world, and the flesh. Through many wrestlings we get to heaven, we make our way thither every step by conflict and contest. Now those that fight the good fight of faith, God will crown them, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Use 1. To fortify our choice. It is left to us whether we will have our rest and ease here or hereafter. Both we cannot have, for rest is for the weary soul. We cannot reasonably hope to leap from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom, if we have never laboured in duties public or secret, withheld not ourselves from any joy. Some have their good things here, Luke xvi. 25, Ps. xvii. 14, their whole portion in this world; others choose a life of labour, patience, and self-denial. To whom think you doth God promise rest? If we will not endure the pains and be at the cost, we shall not have the rest. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, but it is better to please God and save the soul.

Two questions we should often put to ourselves—

1. Is there a motion after something better than the world can afford us? A motion after God; you dare not rest on anything below God. The spiritual life is nothing else but a seeking after God: Ps. xxiv. 6, 'This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O God.' We seek on earth, we find in heaven. But are we seekers or wanderers?

2. Is this motion carried on with that industry, patience, and self-denial that such a matter of importance requireth?

[1.] Industry: Ps. lxxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' God is not to be sought carelessly and by the by; the greatest business of our lives must be for him: 'First seek the kingdom of God,' &c. Mat. vi. 33. The soul must press after him, and labour to enjoy him; this is our primary mark.

[2.] Patience under many disappointments and sorrows. The spouse that sought after her beloved was smitten and wounded by the watchmen, Cant. v. 7. But your hearts are so set upon God and the life to come, that still you make it your chiefest care and business to seek him, and will not be put out of your way: Ps. xlv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not departed from thee; our heart is not turned back.'

[3.] Self-denial of our own ease, pleasure, credit, honour in the world, still conflicting with your own lusts, that at length you may attain the blessed God : Phil. iii. 11, ' If by any means,' &c., Mat. xi. 12.

Use 2. To shame the people of God, that they are so delicate and tender of the flesh when such a rest is provided for them ; that duties are so wearisome ; that we begrudge a few sufferings ; that we so much give way to coldness and lukewarmness, and that God is overlooked and neglected in the general course and drift of our lives ; that we are so loath to be at the trouble of contradicting our lusts, and do no more oppose the interest of the flesh. O christians ! can we expect the rest if we will not labour and strive against sin, even to weariness ?

Secondly, ' Rest with us ;' that is, with us apostles, and other holy ones of God.

Note 1. All christians have the same felicity for substance, though the degrees be different.

Common christians have their rest as well as the apostles. Those that have been together in the labour, in the duty, and the danger, shall be together in the rest and recompense. All the servants entered into the joy of the Lord, though some had an increase of ten talents, some five, Mat. xxv. 1. The grounds of essential happiness are the same to all.

1. The same redeemer and mediator, Exod. xxx. 15. If they had a better Christ, or another mediator to ransom their souls, they might expect another happiness ; but all is brought about by the same redeemer, Jesus Christ, theirs and ours, 1 Cor. i. 2 ; by his mediation, sacrifice, and meritorious righteousness, Rom. iii. 22.

2. The same covenant, which is the common charter of the saints, Acts ii. 39. It is a covenant which offereth the same benefits and requireth the same duties. The same benefits, pardon, life. Pardon : Rom. iv. 23, 24, ' Neither was it written for his sake alone, but for us also, if we believe.' Eternal life is the common portion of all the saints : 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Not for me only, but for all those,' &c. It requireth the same duties, for all the saints have the same rule to walk by, Gal. vi. 16. The same gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth, Rom. i. 16. Well, then, if all have no other charter from God to show for pardon and life, and all are bound to the same duties, all shall have the same happiness.

Note 2. Though the essential happiness of the saints be the same, yet there are degrees in glory. (1.) From scripture. (2.) The nature of that glory and blessedness which we expect. *Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis ad magis.* If I am to love a holy man as a holy man, I am to love those most who excel in holiness. So look what relation holiness hath to heaven, so more holiness hath more relation to heaven. (3.) From the remunerative justice of God.

Note 3. ' Rest with us.' It is a comfortable adjunct to our felicity in heaven that we shall have such company there. Surely the apostle mentions it for their comfort here. So elsewhere it is propounded : Mat. viii. 11, ' Ye shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.' These were mentioned because they were the prime believers, and chief in esteem among the Jews, before whom Christ then spake. So everywhere in scripture it is made a happiness

to be of this society, Heb. xii. 22, 23; Eph. ii. 19, 'Fellow-citizens with all the saints;' Eph. iii. 15, 'Of whom the whole family is named, whether in heaven or earth.' If to be of this society now be a privilege, though severed in distinct habitations, then what a comfort is it to be admitted to a greater nearness of converse with the patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and all the worthies of God. We love their company now; it is sweet to be in the assemblies of the saints on earth, to pray, hear, fast, and communicate together in the Lord's supper; much more in heaven; the saints are more lovely, other manner of saints than ever we knew them before.

Use. Well, then, let us love the saints of God now, for these are to be our everlasting companions: Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 'It is comely and pleasant to live together in unity.' We that look for one home, should we fall out by the way? All agree there; why should we not glorify God with one mind and mouth now? There are different degrees of light, which cause differences of opinion; but there are substantial and common truths enough, wherein we all agree, to bring us to a closer union. Certainly those beautefeous and coal-blowers should be hateful to all christians; the truest zeal and martyrdom will be enough in uniting christians.

SERMON V.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THESS. i. 7.

WE now come to the third thing, the time when our reward shall be fully accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.'

In the words observe—(1.) The person coming, 'The Lord;' (2.) His train and retinue, 'With his mighty angels.'

From thence observe two points—

1. There is a time coming when Christ shall be fully revealed from heaven, and appear in all his glory.

2. That when Christ cometh he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

For the first point.

1. What is this revelation? The coming of Christ is sometimes set forth by the word *ἀποκάλυψις*, revelation; sometimes by the word *ἐπιφάνεια*, appearing. The former is in the text, and in 1 Peter i. 13, 'Hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' So 1 Cor. i. 7, 'Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' *ἀποκάλυψιν*, the revelation. Elsewhere the other word is used; as 2 Tim. iv. 8, Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Both are to the same effect.

The former we are now upon. It is used for these reasons—